

WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

OFFICE OF FARMLAND PRESERVATION NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2010

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 12

San Juan County awarded farmland planning grant



The Washington State Office of Farmland Preservation recently awarded the Agricultural Resources Committee of San Juan County with a farmland preservation technical assistance grant of \$25,000 to develop a San Juan County Agricultural Strategic Plan.

The project is a collaboration between the Agricultural Resources Committee, San Juan County Land Bank and the San Juan Preservation Trust.

"Given the difficult economy at all levels of government, we wanted to be able to provide some financial assistance to counties so they can help their local farmers" said Ron Shultz, Policy Director of the State Conservation Commission. "Agriculture is the number two industry in the state and with the growing interest in locally produced food, we want to encourage and assist counties in planning for these economic opportunities."

The Agricultural Strategic Plan will recommend strategies to promote and strengthen a sustainable agricultural economy, including actions for strengthening and expanding markets through Island Certified Local, direct marketing, business and financial planning, and introduction of value added crops ideally suited to the climate and geography of the San Juan Islands.

Pete Rose, County Administrator, added, "San Juan County has shown a strong commitment to strengthening and restoring a viable agricultural economy. With previous funding from OFP, the county was able to analyze and map existing agricultural activities. This grant will enable the county to build on that information to identify priority farmland for protection, while also focusing on strategic actions that will promote and strengthen the business of agriculture."

Grant funding is provided through the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, a statewide grant program administered by the Recreation and Conservation Office.

Enhanced easement incentive in federal tax bill extended

Congress just renewed a tax incentive for private landowners—especially working family farmers and ranchers—who protect their land with a voluntary conservation agreement. The incentive, which had expired at the end of 2009, helps willing landowners in our community conserve productive agricultural lands and natural areas.

Conservation-minded landowners now have until December 31, 2011 to take advantage of a significant tax deduction for donating a voluntary conservation agreement to permanently protect important natural or historic resources on their land. When landowners donate a conservation easement, they maintain ownership and management of their land and can sell or pass the land on to their heirs, while foregoing future development rights.

The enhanced incentive applies to a landowner's federal income tax. The incentive:

- Raises the deduction a donor can take for donating a voluntary conservation agreement from 30% of their income in any year to 50%;
- Allows farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100% of their income; and
- Increases the number of years over which a donor can take deductions from 6 to 16 years.

If you are interested in learning more, you can contact your local land trust or contact us here at the Office of Farmland Preservation at 360-407-7474 or jgiuntoli@scc.wa.gov.

Stay in contact and sign up for the OFP-Newsletter!

Send an e-mail addressed to jgiuntoli@scc.wa.gov with the subject title:
"add to Newsletter"

Email frequency is around one a month

Net Farm Income Forecast Up 31 Percent in 2010

According to the USDA Economic Research Service, net farm income is forecast at \$81.6 billion in 2010, up 31 percent from 2009 and 26 percent higher than the 10-year average of \$64.8 billion for 2000-2009. Net cash income at \$92.5 billion would be a nominal record, 2.3 percent above the prior record attained in 2008. Net value added is expected to increase by almost \$20 billion in 2010 to \$132.0 billion. The net value added of agriculture to the U.S. economy in inflation-adjusted terms reached its two highest levels since the mid 1970s in 2004 and 2008. Inflation-adjusted net cash income has reached levels not seen since the mid-1970s for the fourth time since 2004, including the forecast for this year. The mid-1970s was the last comparable period when U.S. farming enjoyed multiple years of sustained levels of high output and income.

To view the full report, go to: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FarmIncome/nationalestimates.htm>

Greenbank Farm Training Center accepting applications for 2011

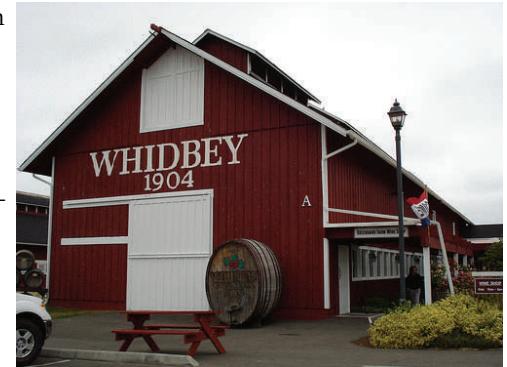


Greenbank Farm Training Center is accepting applications for 2011 for their Farmer Training Programs. Their training programs are designed for participants who, through experience, are committed to pursuing a career in sustainable agriculture and desire a formal and thorough academic and experiential education in the business and production aspects of small scale farming. With an emphasis on fresh vegetable production and CSA marketing, they examine all aspects of starting and running a small scale organic

farm from goal setting and business planning to planting, harvesting, and marketing. Their goal is to give you the skills and knowledge you need to confidently enter the growing field of sustainable agricultural producers.

For full details including length of course and costs, go to:

[Greenbank Farm Training Center - Call for 2011 Applications \(PDF\)](#)



Get the dirt on your dirt!



Curious to know if you have soils of statewide importance? To find out, you can access soils maps and information through Web Soil Survey. The links below include a short PowerPoint presentation on using Web Soil Survey and another document on how to get prime and unique farmlands information.

[Tutorial on how to get prime and unique farmlands information \(PDF\)](#)

[How to get an Important Farmlands Map in Web Soil \(PDF\)](#)

Renewable Energy and Efficiency Grant Workshops

USDA Rural Development is sponsoring five two-part Renewable Energy/Energy Efficiency workshops. The workshops, which are FREE, will include information about the funding and technical assistance available to farms and small businesses through the USDA's Renewable Energy for America Program (REAP). Eligibility requirements and sample project proposals will be discussed.

The 9007 Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Improvements Program can provide guaranteed loans, grants for a combination loan and grant to eligible applicants for eligible projects and costs. Eligible projects for renewable energy systems include such things as wind, solar, biomass, or geothermal systems. Energy Efficiency projects, for example, can be such things as upgrading electrical motors, insulation, or heating, cooling and lighting upgrades.

Two workshops have already taken place, see the attached flyer for workshop opportunities in January taking place in Spokane, Yakima, and Everett. [Upcoming Renewable Energy/Energy Efficiency Workshops \(PDF\)](#)

Grant opportunities available

Rural Microentrepreneur Asst. Program

The Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program (RMAP), is a program created in the 2008 farm bill, provides grants, loans, and technical assistance to new and existing rural microentrepreneurs.

For more information, go to:

[Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program \(PDF\)](#)

Conservation Innovation Grants

NRCS is announcing availability of Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies. NRCS anticipates the amount available will be approximately \$25 million.

Applications for pre-proposal phase must be received by Dec. 28, 2010.

Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative

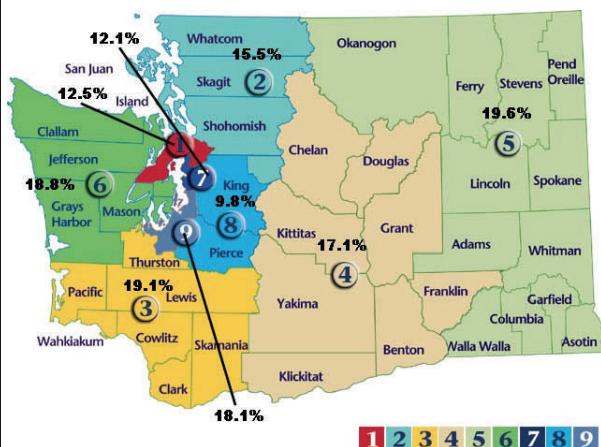
NIFA requests applications for the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI). Grants are used to solve critical organic agriculture issues, priorities, or problems through the integration of research and extension activities. The amount available in FY 2011 is anticipated to be approximately \$19 million.

Applications are due Feb. 10, 2011

According to reports, Washington's 'Food Insecurity' grows

According to a recently released report from USDA, Washington states food security has grown worse. The USDA report [2009 Household Food Security in the United States](#), details how many hundreds of thousands of Washington citizens experienced 'food insecurity' in 2009. The number of Washington households that are food insecure, meaning they struggle to afford enough nutritious food, rose from 288,000 to 367,000 in 2009, a 27-percent increase over the prior year. The rise in households that are hungry was even more striking: 152,200 Washington

households met the definition for hunger (called "very low food insecurity" in the report), up 40,200 or 36 percent.



Congressional District	Percentage
1st	12.5%
2nd	15.5%
3rd	19.1%
4th	17.1%
5th	19.6%
6th	18.8%
7th	12.1%
8th	9.8%

Source: [Food Hardship: A Closer Look at Hunger](#)

In a separate report titled [Food Hardship: A Closer Look at Hunger](#) published by the Food Research and Action Center, Washington ranked 26th in the nation in food hardship at 17.9%. This report aggregates food hardship data by congressional district based on polling conducted by Gallup and analyzed by the Food Research and Action Center. Mississippi ranked number 1 at 26.2%. The table provided is the breakdown by Washington state congressional districts.

USDA Introduces Online Farm Link Tool for Beginning Farmers

USDA recently announced the release of TIP Net, an online tool to help link retiring farmers who have expiring Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts with beginning or socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers who want to buy or rent land for their operations.

Under the [Transition Incentives Program \(TIP\)](#), administered by USDA's Farm Service Agency, retired or retiring owners or operators with expiring CRP contracts can receive up to two additional annual rental payments if they sell or lease the CRP land to beginning or socially disadvantaged farmers who are interested in bringing the land into production using sustainable grazing or crop production methods, including transitioning to organic.

As of November 30, TIP participation included 372 contracts on more than 52,000 acres, with nearly \$5 million obligated for TIP annual rental payments.

For more information on the TIP program, FSA's TIP website [here](#).

Searchable Database of Certified Organic Operations



The National Organic Program (NOP) is making available a complete listing of organic operations certified by U.S. Department of Agriculture accredited certifying agents during the 2009 certification year. For the first time, the listing can be searched by keywords, name of operation, certifying agent, certificate numbers, primary and secondary scopes of certification, country, state, and products produced. The database will serve as a useful tool to increase marketing opportunities for certified organic operations, and will also help consumers better locate sources of certified organic product. NOP plans to update the database when 2010 information is collected.

As of 2009, Washington had 116 certified organic operations.

For more information on certification, go to: [Certification and Accreditation](#)

To access the database, go to: <http://apps.ams.usda.gov/nop/>

Upcoming Cultivating Success education offerings in WA



Interested in finding out about new training opportunities in Washington for farmers and ranchers? Then check out the upcoming Washington offering of Cultivating Success programs. Many courses are available online, or in person.

Cultivating Success courses [are available throughout Washington State](#). Courses are open to academic students, farmers and community members, for academic credit or Community Education Units. Courses may be taken individually or in a series for a Cultivating Success Program Certificate. Please be aware that course locations and offerings vary. If you would like to see a course offered in your area please contact info@cultvatingsuccess.org

Scholarships are available for many course offerings!

Upcoming course offerings include, Sustainable Small Farming & Ranching, On Farm Internships, Agricultural Entrepreneurship, Organic Gardening and Farming, Organic Farming Practicum, Ecological Soils Management, Sustainable Livestock Production, Science, Society & Sustainable Food Systems, Field Analysis of Sustainable Food Systems, and World Agricultural Systems.

For a full list of opportunities, go to: http://www.cultvatingsuccess.org/coursecalendar_WA.htm

2011 Country Living Expo & Cattlemen's Winterschool

Registration is now open for the 2011 Country Living Expo & Cattlemen's Winterschool! Over 150 classes are offered from raising backyard chickens, chain saw maintenance, naturally dye wool and fabric, organic gardening, to learning about having your own family milk cow. Other popular classes will cover raising a variety of livestock including beef, swine, sheep, horse, goats, poultry and alpacas, developing and marketing your small business, growing tomatoes, making cider, preserving food and many more educational classes on rural living.

The 2011 Country Living Expo & Cattlemen's Winterschool will be held on Saturday, Jan. 29, from 7:30 am to 5 pm, at Stanwood High School, 7400 272nd Street N.W. in Stanwood. Early registration is available until Dec. 31. The cost is \$55 per person and includes a selection of five class sessions from the more than 150 offerings, a smoked prime rib lunch or gourmet vegetarian, and an all-day trade show with over 70 vendors. After Dec. 31 the cost will be \$60 per person.

Details, including the day's full schedule, a listing and description of classes, registration information and access to online registration are available at <http://skagit.wsu.edu/CountryLivingExpo/>

Events sponsors, small farm vendors and non-profits are welcome to part of the trade show.

For more information contact Program Coordinator, Joan DeVries 428-4270, ext. 240.

Commerce WSDA assisted export sales jump 54 percent

Even in a down economy, Washington State reported near-record FY 2010 sales of \$154 million from state export assistance, the Washington State Department of Agriculture and Department of Commerce recently announced. Both agencies are encouraging more businesses to consider export strategies.



Department of Commerce
Innovation is in our nature.

State programs at Commerce and WSDA provide small and medium-sized businesses with export training and counseling, facilitate international trade show participation, and assist with trading partner and market introductions. Export sales from these successful state-supported activities account for a small but strategic portion of Washington's total annual export sales of more than \$50 billion on average in recent years.

Clients utilizing WSDA export assistance saw sales grow to \$95.8 million for fiscal year 2010. That growth represented an increase of more than \$33 million over 2009. Commerce clients reported \$58.2 million for 2010, a \$21 million jump from 2009. Both agencies are on track to exceed FY2011 export sales targets for their programs.



President Obama signs Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010

President Obama, on December 13, signed into law the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.



(OFFICIAL WHITE HOUSE PHOTO BY SAMANTHA APPLETON)

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 will improve the quality of school breakfasts, lunches and other foods sold in schools while also strengthening nutrition programs that serve young children, including WIC and the Child and Adult Care Food Program. The bill is an important advancement of the Obama Administration's goal of solving the problem of childhood obesity within a generation, which First Lady Michelle Obama has championed through the Let's Move! Initiative.

According to reports, the bill reauthorizes the federal nutrition program, a \$4.5 billion measure that expands free school meals for the needy. For the first time, it sets nutritional standards for all food, whether in cafeterias or in school vending machines, and is designed to help fight obesity among children, which has led to an increase in disease, such as diabetes.

In short - In short - In short

REPORT:

National Fruit and Vegetable Alliance Report Card on Consumption

[Executive Summary \(PDF\)](#)

[Full Report Card \(PDF\)](#)

This report is a continuation of 2005s National Action Plan developed by the National Fruit and Vegetable Alliance. It also outlines key research findings and assigns grades to strategies that have been in place since 2005.



Grazing Retired CRP:

An Economically Viable Alternative

For the last three years, Managing Change NW has worked with a group of producers and researchers from WSU on an experimental project called "Beefing Up the Palouse". This was part of a group of agricultural pilot projects that were designed to address a variety of agricultural problems in our state.

If you want to learn more about an economically viable alternative to CRP, attend one of the informative meetings or contact Maurice Robinette (509) 869-1182 or go to: [Schedule of meetings](#)

Investing for Farm Families, learn with Extension Online

This online class gives farm families the information they need to make strategic decisions while weaving together farm and personal investments. Developed by Extension educators across the nation, the 8-lesson course helps farm families plan for a financially stable future that meets long-term needs. Participants can work at their own pace, with each lesson taking less than an hour.

For details on how to participate, go to:

http://www.extension.org/pages/Investing_for_Farm_Families

WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Slow Money: Pairing investors with food businesses

KPLU - December 15, 2010 By Tom Banse

Forget Wall Street. One way some well-off Northwesterners avoided steep losses in the stock market in recent years was by making unusual alternative investments: in small farms and food businesses. These “angel investors” are organizing loose networks to match their money with cash-hungry local producers. Think of it as slow-food meets slow money.

Farmers Crystie and Keith Kisler are smiling and popping corks, as they pour samples of their hard cider and fruit liquors. We’re in the tasting room of the new cidery on their small organic farm, Finnriver Farm.

But rewind to four years ago. The Kislers had hit a rough patch and needed to borrow money. Crystie remembers she didn’t even bother to apply at a bank: “We didn’t have the income, or the assets or the confidence perhaps even to approach a bank at that time,” says Kisler. *Read the rest of the story by going to: <http://www.kplunews.org/post/slow-money-pairing-investors-food-businesses>*

WA Beginning Farmer/Rancher Bond Financing Program

The Washington State Housing Finance Commission in partnership with Northwest Farm Credit Services is offering loans for qualifying beginning farmers/ranchers that can be combined with other loans, grants and other sources of funds. The Beginning Farmer/Rancher Bond Program is a tax-exempt bond program designed to assist beginning farmers/ranchers in the state of Washington acquire agricultural property at lower interest rates.

To learn more, go to: <http://www.wshfc.org/FarmRanch/index.htm>

Washington Animal Agriculture Team

Visit the Washington Animal Agriculture Team website at <http://animalag.wsu.edu/> for current livestock marketing information, newsletters, livestock health and nutrition, forages, quality assurance, water quality, and manure management as well as links to local Extension websites.



Office of Farmland Preservation

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VISIT US ONLINE!

<http://ofp.scc.wa.gov>



Farmland Preservation Task Force

Farmer Representatives

Jacob Anderson, South Central

Sheryl Cox, South East

Jeff Emtman, North East

Bob Hart, Chair, North West

Greg Schoenbachler, South West

Richard Thomason, North Central

County Commissioners

Don Munks, Western Washington

Rudy Plager, Eastern Washington

WA Association of Conservation Districts

Fred Colvin

Legislators

Senator Mary Margaret Haugen

Senator Jim Honeyford

Representative Joel Kretz

Representative Larry Springer

Non-Voting Members

Roylene Rides at the Door, USDA NRCS

Dee Caputo, CTED

State Agencies/Offices

Lynn Bahrych, Chair, Conservation Commission

Lee Faulconer, WA State Dept. of Ag.

John Mankowski, Governors Executive Policy

“OUR MISSION IS TO PROMOTE THE VITALITY OF FARMING, FARMERS, AND RANCHERS BY ENSURING THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURAL LANDS IN WASHINGTON STATE. WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS THROUGH POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR, THE LEGISLATURE, THE OFFICE OF FARMLAND PRESERVATION AND OTHERS AND BY ENLISTING PUBLIC SUPPORT. PROGRAMS WILL BE VOLUNTARY, RECOGNIZE LOCAL PRIORITIES, AND PROVIDE FOR ECONOMIC INCENTIVES.”